



Trade Release

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OSHA issues new resource to protect emergency workers at combustible dust fires

WASHINGTON – The Occupational Safety and Health Administration today published [*Firefighting Precautions at Facilities with Combustible Dust*](#), a new, informative booklet that outlines safe procedures for emergency responders who may face fires and explosions caused by combustible dust.

“This booklet will keep both emergency response and facility workers safe by giving them a framework to prepare for potential emergencies involving combustible dust,” said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. “Stakeholders that have reviewed the booklet, including fire chiefs and union health and safety representatives, describe it as ‘an excellent resource for explaining the hazards associated with combustible dust and outlining the best practices for pre-incident operational preparation by emergency responders.’”

Since 1980, more than 130 workers have been killed and more than 780 injured in combustible dust explosions. The publication describes how combustible dust explosions occur and uses previous incidents to illustrate how firefighting operations can prevent combustible dust explosions. The booklet explains the preparations emergency responders can make before a response and how these preparations will affect the operational plan during a response.

Combustible dusts include fine particles, fibers, chips, chunks or flakes that, under certain conditions, can cause a fire or explosion when suspended in air. Types of dusts include metal (for example, aluminum and magnesium), wood, plastic, rubber, coal, flour, sugar and paper, among others. OSHA’s [Combustible Dust](#) Web page provides employers and workers with additional information and resources for preventing and minimizing the effects of combustible dust fires and explosions.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA’s role is to ensure these conditions for America’s working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit www.osha.gov.

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